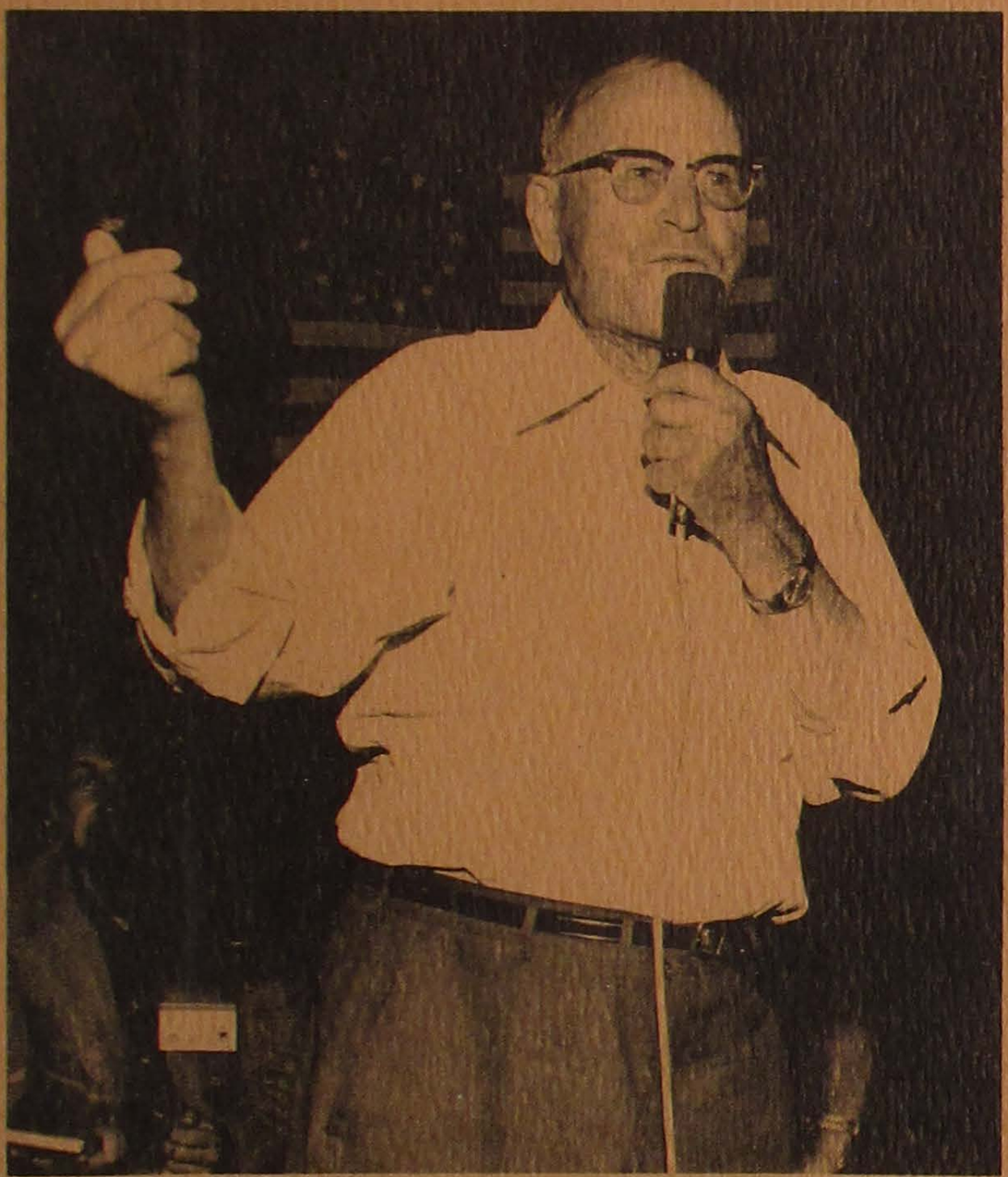
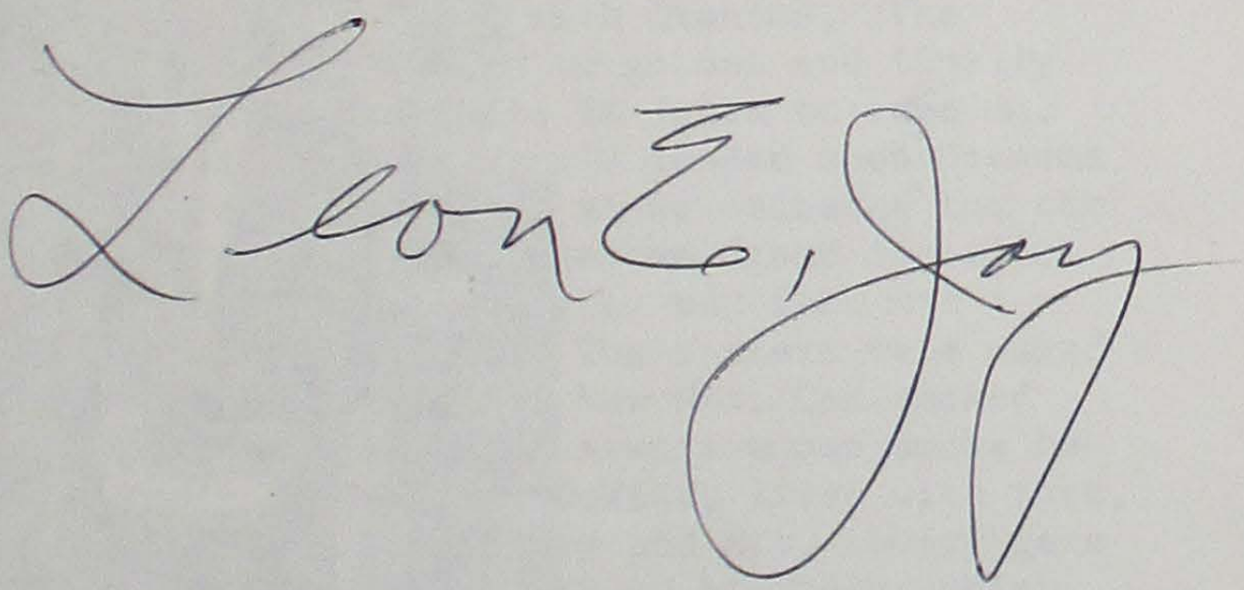


MY FIRST 84 YEARS
(1892-1976)

by Leon E. Joy



50 YEARS OF AUCTIONEERING
taken December 4, 1963

50 YEARS OF AUCTIONEERING
taken December 4, 1963 with sale date books.

MY EARLY LIFE

On a hot summer July day--July 21, 1892--FLETCHER L. JOY was cutting oats on his farm 2 miles south of Dana, Greene County, Iowa. Someone came out and told him he would have to unhitch and go to Jefferson, about 11 miles, after a doctor, for his wife, Mary, was about to give birth. Accordingly he did. LEON EVERETT JOY WAS BORN THAT DAY. How do I know about it? I have heard this story told by my parents many times.

The first recollection that I have of anything was when I was 4 years old and my father would grind feed for his cows with a sweep mill. That was powered by 2 horses who went round and round and I used to watch out of the east kitchen window and say "roun-roun-roun" until I made my mother nervous.

The next thing I remember was when we had a sale. It must have been in the winter of 1897, as we were going to move to Kansas and live with my father's mother because Grandpa Joy had died and someone had to live with Grandma. The day of the sale I wanted to go out and finally my Mother persuaded Uncle Ed Jones to take me. We had our immigrant car all loaded when Grandma Joy became sick and died, so we unloaded the car and rented a house in Browntown Grand Junction and lived there that year, as our farm was rented out for the year. The renters were named Cox and I always remember how Mrs. Cox smoked a clay pipe. I had never seen a woman smoke before. Their son-in-law, DeWitt, lived with them. We lived next to Dr. Lowery and Mrs. Lowery gave me a little dish (glass) on my birthday, which I still had long after I was married.

About cutting oats: I well remember the harvest when I was 5-6-7 years old. We had a left hand cut 6 ft McCormich binder with no tongue truck. We used 3 horses and when we stopped to rest the horses or put in twine, or oil the binder or make repairs, we had a board to put under the tongue to take the weight off the horses' necks. The men--mostly

neighbors exchanged work--would take 6 horses to the field and change them every 2 hours. Usually they took barrels of water for the horses to drink.

A binder operator generally dropped 3 bundles at a dump, thus it took 3 rounds to make a shock row. The first round cut was usually the back swath, then the shockers would have to throw these bundles out so the binder would not catch them in the reel or sickle. Two good shockers could usually shock as fast as a binder could cut the grain. Some shockers prided themselves in being able to take the last bundle off the binder when the field was done. These shockers were few and far between. There used to be transient shockers from Kansas and Missouri who were already through with their harvest. Oats were usually shocked 8 bundles on the ground and one for a cap.

After cutting and shocking came the waiting period to thresh. Farmers used to like the grain to stay in the shocks 2 to 3 weeks before threshing. In the late 90's and early 1900's, there were no company machines. All threshing was custom work. Sometimes a farmer in the neighborhood would own a rig and of course he would thresh for his neighbors first. Ordinarily a 32 inch separator would require 8 bundle wagons to haul in the bundles. That would take 4 pitchers in the field. It usually took 2 to 4 men to take care of the threshed oats. As there were no grain elevators in those days it took a lot of scooping. The machine crew were the engineer, separator man, water hauler; and it took 1 to 2 to stack the straw. Sometimes a boy with a pony would carry water to the pitchers in the field. So you see a crew usually consisted of at least 20 men.

Shock threshing usually ran from the last of July until Sept. 1st. Those who could not get threshed until late would stack their oats in round stacks and they would have to set in the stacks at least 6 weeks to go through a sweat before they could be threshed. Stack threshing

was usually done in time to start picking corn--about Oct. 1st. Machine operators charged less for stack threshing (usually 3 cents for shock and 1½ or 2 cents for stack threshing) because it could be threshed faster and came at season's end. The women would exchange working also to help get a large meal ready for dinner. Most runs went home for supper. (A few did not.) Many times the women who had small houses would set the table outside on boards for dinner and the younger children would take small tree branches and keep the flies off the food. My mother (and other women also) would set out wash tubs for the men to wash in and would have several buckets of water ready for washing.

A special event after threshing was filling out straw ticks (this was before bought mattresses) with fresh straw and the first few nights we would have to use a chair to climb into bed.

When I was a little boy, as soon as I could talk, I always wanted to be the center of attraction. My mother would try to send me outdoors when she had company but I always wanted to stay around and hear what was said. One time my father took me with him when he took our milk to the creamery about 4 miles from home. Of course it was with a team and wagon. When we got home, my father told my mother that he would never take me again--said I never stopped talking. When I was about 7 or 8 years old my Uncle Ed Jones had a closing out farm auction. He lived between our home and the school house, so I asked my father to come to school and get me and let me stop at the auction. I had no idea what it meant to have an auction sale. They called them PUBLIC SALES in those days. When we arrived at the sale I saw a man talking (oh, so fast, I thought) and people were following him around and he was in command. It did not take long for me to decide that that was what I wanted. I guess I was a natural born auctioneer. Well, I went home and started to call bids. I made my brothers disgusted because

whenever I was helping with the chores I would be auctioneering. They got tired of it but the longer I practised, the more I was determined to some day become an auctioneer. While still in country school I used to have the other children line up and I would practise selling until they got tired and disgusted with me. That is the way I became interested in the auction business. More about that later.

When I was quite young, probably 7 or 8, my mother took Warren, Winnifred and me with her on a visit to Dowagiac, Michigan to visit her sisters. While changing trains in Chicago we had to wait an hour or so and of course I wouldn't sit still but had to prowl around like any kid would. I never had heard of indoor plumbing. Wandering into a toilet, I saw a large box with a chain hanging down and like any inquisitive boy, I pulled the chain and then I heard water start to run. Was I ever scared? I thought I would flood the whole depot. The doors to the toilets in those days did not come clear to the floor. I rushed back to my mother and sat down and watched under that door for the water to run out. It didn't, of course, and was I relieved!

MY SCHOOL DAYS

This is the story of my education. I attended 4 different schools in my lifetime. I started school at the Fisher School, District no. 5 in Junction Twp., Greene County Iowa. I must have started about 1898 as I went to school alone until my younger brother, Warren, was old enough to go. We lived a little less than one mile from the school house. All children walked in those days. We never heard of school buses. Of course if the weather was bad someone would come and pick us up. Our school was small--only a few families had children. There was

the Higgins family who had 9 children and some were in school with me. Barney, Jim and Barbara who were twins and my age, and Frank. They are all gone now. Enid McCombs, who went on to High School and graduated with me; the Caufield girls and Edith and Amelia Fisher. These are all I can remember. However some came and went as I went to this school until March 1st, 1905, when we moved to South Dakota. (More about that later.)

We landed in South Dakota on March 1st or thereabouts, 1905. We lived on a farm south of Lane and our school was a little old schoolhouse on the prairie almost 2 miles away with no houses between our house and school. Of course Warren and Winnie went with me. I do not remember much about this school as we only went there until June 1st. Then before school started in September we had moved to town--Woonsocket, S.D.--where we went to school for 2 years. I was at the right age to become interested in school and make a lot of acquaintances. There were several in my class but they were mostly Polish or Norwegian or foreigners of some kind. I remember one girl whose name was Myrtle Rothlissberger; another was Annabelle Knight; a boy named Samuelson who lived across the street from us; a Dewey Van Dyke who had a queer shaped head but was very smart. Then there was Bernice Stakke whose brother became a lifelong friend of my brother Warren. He even stopped to see me since I have lived here where I do now. Harry Stakke was probably the best schoolmate Warren ever had.

In September 1907, we moved to Grand Junction, Iowa where I started to school and stayed to graduate in 1911. In our class were 9 and of this date (Nov. 13, 1976), four are still alive. They are Hugo Bruns, a banker at Auburn, Iowa; Howard Porter who has been a teacher all his life, and now lives in Colorado at Ft. Morgan; Gertrude Young still lives in Grand Junction. In my high school days I was quite

active in school activities. I belonged to the debating team and we put on several plays. When we graduated, I put on a Shakespeare play, "She Stoops to Conquer". We did a good job as we had to repeat it, and then went to Ogden, Iowa to put it on there at the old Opera House.

While in school, there were three of us--Howard Porter, Roy Jewett now deceased, and myself--who each tried to outdo the others in high grades and it was always very close between us three. Sometimes one would be ahead and next month another one would be ahead.

The class of 1910 and our class were very close. Two of our boys, Roy Jewett and John Blaylock, married two girls from the 1910 class--Mabel Cox and Anna Egli. We used to have many games and flag raising contests between the two classes. After the contests were over we would be like one large family group.

After graduating from High School I intended to go to college at Ames. While still in high school, I had pneumonia every spring and naturally I was a sickly, puny guy. The high school principal came out to our farm one day while my father and I were plowing corn and he told my father to keep me home for a year because he did not think my health would stand it. Naturally I was disappointed but as usually is the case, I never did go to college, much to my regret.

One of the activities participated in while in high school was raising purebred Rose Comb Rhode Island Red chickens. I was one of the first persons to ship baby chicks. I would ship them in little cartons holding 25 in each case, sending them by parcel post. The prices varied from 10 to 20 cents each, according to how good a flock one had. I used to show at poultry shows that were held each winter. I won many blue ribbons so I could get

a good price for my chicks as well as breeding stock. I went to a poultry show at Scranton, Iowa and bought a rooster for $10. My father thought I had lost my mind. My poultry business got so big that my father built me a new poultry house. Most farm families kept chickens but the farm wife usually set the hens and let them raise the chickens. Of course they would not all go into a shed or chicken house but would often roost in the trees. The first cold night, a farmer and usually his sons or hired men, would go out after supper with lanterns and catch the chickens that were roosting in the trees or the cattle shed or horse barn. They generally would put the pullets in the chicken house so they would be fed better and start laying. They would take the roosters (cockerels, we called them) and crate them to sell the next day. Of course they would keep a few to eat along through the winter. The poultry business got to be quite an industry in the early part of the century. There were several Poultry Journals printed and many would advertise their flocks, selling hatching eggs in season, cockerels and pullets in season, and of course, baby chicks in the spring.

While I am on the poultry story I might as well skip ahead and tell that after I was married and living in Ames, Roy Roupe, who ran a shoe store and repair shop and was a neighbor, along with a Professor H. A. Bittenbender in the Poultry Department at Ames College, and I bought a large commercial incubator and rented a room in the basement of the Olsan building (S.W. corner of Main and Duff) and started the first hatchery in Ames. Later we sold out to Jim Gilchrist who ran the Ames Hatchery for a long time.

As mentioned before, I will tell you about our living in South Dakota. I had two brothers, Walter and Leslie, who were 10 and 12 years older than I. We lived on a 180 acre Iowa farm and that

was hardly enough to keep my father and brothers busy. So my father went to Jerauld County, South Dakota in 1904, and bought 400 acres for $30 per acre. We rented out our Iowa farm for 2 years and all moved to South Dakota in the spring of 1905. Our neighbor, John Higgins, also bought some land for 2 of his older sons and moved there at the same time. Between us (the Higgins and Joys) we had 3 immigrant cars plus one carload of cattle. We loaded these cars at Dana, Iowa about March 1st, 1905 and started for Dakota on a Tuesday. I was 12 years old at that time and I went with my father in the immigrant cars. We landed in Mitchell, South Dakota on the following Thursday and were caught in a bad blizzard. There were many people moving to the Dakotas that year. There were over 300 immigrant cars stuck at Mitchell for several days. There was so much snow that they couldn't move any cars in the railroad yards until they had hauled some snow away. That was a slow process with teams and sleds. Finally Sunday afternoon they were able to get a few of us out that were going only a short distance--Letcher, Woonsocket, Lane and Wessington Springs. As we were going to Lane, we got out and unloaded our stock (cattle and horses) Sunday evening after dark at Lane. They had been in the cars since Tuesday morning and were they ever glad to get out.

We got moved out to our farm and in a few days my mother, sister Winnifred, brother Warren, my older brother Walter and his wife Anna and their son, Lawrence, came up on the passenger train. My brother Leslie was already in Dakota. We all lived at the farm until the 1st of September when my father, mother, Warren, Winnifred and myself moved to Woonsocket, about 8 miles from our farm. We children could go to town school. We lived there until the 1st of September, 1907, when we moved back to Grand Junction. Walter and Leslie stayed in Dakota for several years. My father sold the Dakota farm in 1908 or 1909 for

$40 per acre and my brothers rented farms. Walter and his wife moved back to Iowa in the spring of 1910 and Leslie and Ann stayed until the spring of 1916. Their family were all born in South Dakota. Leslie had a sale on Dec. 15, 1915. Murrel and I went up to the sale and I sold it. We called this our wedding trip, as we had married on Dec. 8th, 1915, just a week before Leslie's sale.

Living in Dakota was quite an experience for a teen age Iowa boy who had never been away from home. Of course there were coyotes and badgers and prairie chickens that I had never seen before. The neighbors were all different--many Germans, Poles and Russians. It seemed that immigrants from foreign countries all came to the Dakotas.

While living in Woonsocket I was quite anxious to make some money so one summer I helped a cement contractor build sidewalks. They built them different in those days. They made the first 2 or 3 inches coarse and dryer than we do now and it had to be tamped. That was my job. Then they put on a richer finer wetter inch on top. It was hard work but I enjoyed it.

Then we had a neighbor, a Mr. Stewart, who had a popcorn and peanut stand up on main street (only about 3 blocks from our home) and he had one of the old time machines that had a steam engine to run the corn popper and peanut roaster. I got a job helping him nights after school and on Saturdays. He had a little song that he used to sing--"Nice buttered pop corn, nice buttered pop corn, nice buttered pop corn and peanuts too, peanuts too, peanuts too, nice buttered pop corn and peanuts too." I got so I could sing it but not as good as Mr. Stewart could. Then I got acquainted with some children at school whose parents ran the newspaper and they talked me into getting a part time job as reporter for the newspaper. All I had to do was ask people where they were going (usually down at the depot at train time) or if they had company, or any news item that they

thought might be interesting to the public. I got paid so much per line. To tell the truth, I did not make much as I was too backward to walk up to strangers and ask them questions. (Bet you never thought an auctioneer was ever backward or bashful.)

My newspaper job did not last long. Then of course I raised some chickens every summer. That is about all I can say about living in Dakcta. The town was full of saloons as was common in those days and we never could get used to western life--much different from life on an Iowa farm. I am glad for the experience but have never been back since Leslie's sale.

MY AUCTION CAREER

This is the story of my auctioneer career. I have mentioned earlier how I always wanted to be an auctioneer. I think I have said this before--I think I am a natural born auctioneer. On December 4th, 1913, Oliver C. Woltz and Frank A. W. Johnson had an auction for C. E. Kever, just north of Dawson, Iowa and O. C. Woltz, who I knew very well, said he would take me to this sale and let me see if I could sell. He said this sale was far enough from my home that I would not know anyone and would not be embarrassed. A special friend of mine (Roy Youngman, who was a rural mail carrier) laid off his work and went with us. You will note that all through my life I have had friends doing a lot for me.

I sold a few items and they all said I could be an auctioneer. Woltz and Johnson said they would like to take me with them but they did not have a large volume of business and they did not think I could get enough experience with them. Besides, O. C. was rather young in business.

We had a very popular and successful auctioneer in our town--Frank Luther. He was my idol when it came to auctioneers, but I did not have the nerve to ask him if he would teach me the business because I thought he would not want to put up with me. I was surely mistaken about him. In town that night after I had been with Woltz and Johnson, Frank Luther heard about it and said to me (everyone loafed at Elmer Gaylord's garage and I was working there as stores stayed open at night) "Come with me to Sid McDowell's sale at Rippey tomorrow and I will try you out." I was so elated that I hardly slept that night. I wrote to my future wife who was in Spokane, Washington, and told her of my chance of getting into the auction business. I went with Frank Luther as I mentioned above and he let me sell some and he said he had never had anyone that showed as much promise of becoming an auctioneer since he had trained his oldest son. That night I went down to his house and he said if I wanted to learn the auction business he would take me with them (he had 2 sons with him at that time and they usually had 2 sales every day) for the remainder of the auction season. He would let me work every day. In the spring (March, when sales were over for the year) I could pay him $100. So that is the way I got started. I quit my job at the garage and went with the Luthers until the sales were over. When I went to pay him, he said I had driven the car all winter and helped them so much he would only charge me $50. Then he gave me some advice. He said: "Now don't stay around Grand Junction and try to get my business. If you could find someone in Iowa who is old and needs help, that is the quickest and easiest way to get into the auction business."

I had another real good special friend--Dr. Lloyd Buck, a veterinarian--who was from Ames, Iowa and he knew the auctioneer there. E. F. Posegate was getting a little old and he had a drinking problem that was hard on his

auction business. Dr. Buck brought me over here and we contacted Eli Posegate. He said he would take me along and give me 40% of the commissions.

Accordingly, I came to Ames in the fall of 1914 and went into business with E. F. Posegate. He was a very good auctioneer but would not stay sober so I just fell into the business and have been here at Ames, Iowa ever since. In those days the only auctions that were held were farm auctions--machinery and live stock. Sales were held only from possibly some in September but usually in November after corn was picked, until the middle of March. Then auctioneers had to do something else through the summer months. I had a job selling cars for Pete Mathre--Overland cars. Some auctioneers were farmers, some real estate or insurance agents. Real estate sales, business close-outs and other types of auctions did not get very popular until after World War I.

I remember my total earnings for the first winter in Ames was less than $500. However, Greene County (my original home) had a quarantine on live stock for foot and mouth disease during the months of January and February, 1915, so the Luthers had some sales cancelled and when they opened up they were very busy and they had me come back and help them on some of their sales.

I said the only types of sales were farm auctions but there was one other type that was getting popular then, That was pure bred live stock sales--hogs, cattle, horses. It was the ambition of nearly every farm sale auctioneer to become a pure bred live stock auctioneer and I was no exception. Pure bred auctioneers usually specialized on some particular breed. I eventually specialized in Hampshire hogs. That was a hard field to break into. I bought a pure bred Hampshire sow and started in the hog business in a small way. I showed at the Iowa State Fair to get acquainted with the various Hampshire breeders. At that time, Tom Deem of Cameron,

Missouri was the popular Hampshire auctioneer. He was very busy and the breed was becoming quite popular so there was a place for another breed auctioneer. I got acquainted with Ed Stone who was Editor of the Hampshire Breed Paper (THE HAMPSHIRE ADVOCATE) and of course I studied Hampshire pedigrees and by 1918 I was selling sales all over Iowa, South Dakota and Nebraska. I was quite busy along with farm sales.

E. F. Posegate didn't like for me to go away so much. He really quit about 1924 when I took a young man Merrill Hunter with me. He was exceptionally bright and intelligent and started out on high in the auction business. Then on Nov. 27, 1926, he took my Model T coupe to go home in the north part of town (I was operating an implement store on Duff just south of the railroad tracks) and he was hit by a Northwestern freight train at the Kellogg crossing and died within a few hours. After that, I went alone, sometimes having someone to help work the ring. In 1929 I went to work for Mathison Motor Co., selling Fords. I never quit the auction business--always sold a sale when I was called. They (Mathison's) had a mechanic named Tom Larson who used to go with me and work the ring. He became one of the best ring men I have ever known. He couldn't sell but he could sure get the bids for the auctioneer.

Sales became scarce and far between. Many tried to be auctioneers and were so eager for business they would cut the commission and undermine all their competition. Those were tough times. In 1933 I started a livestock auction market in an old farm barn on North Grand Ave. just north of 13th Street. Chas. Knight owned the barn. Live stock auction markets were just beginning to get started at that time. They were called sale barns at that time and some still insist on calling them by that name. We started out selling a few head of livestock and some miscellaneous

items. As times got hard farmers would bring a calf or a few pigs; maybe a horse or steer or old cow, to get some money. That is really what put weekly market day sales on the map. Then the drought years of '34 and '35 and '36 came along and we received a lot of stock from the south part of the state where they were drier than we were here in Central Iowa. Our business got so large that the residential neighbors started to complain. It was nothing unusual to have 600 to 800 head of livestock at this sale and it would last until 7 or 8 o'clock at night. John Peterson of Sheldahl, Iowa was one of our largest consignors. He saw the need of a more modern sales barn and induced a neighbor, Oley Storey, to finance us and we would build a new barn. Accordingly we built the live stock sales pavillion on South Duff (where Wards Plaza is now) and we got started in February 1936. We three operated it until 1938 when they bought me out. I still continued to sell for them. In the meantime I had work selling for many different sales barns. I sold for 3 years at Marshalltown. Sold different times for various barns when their auctioneer was on vacation or sick. I sold one winter at Colfax. Then in 1937 I got a job selling at Dows, Iowa every Monday and sold there for 21 years. Part of that time I sold at Iowa Falls every week. In 1950, the Petersons (John and his son, Dean) bought the Story City Sales Pavillion and I sold there for many, many years until it became so large that I now have my associate sell it.

In 1949 I took on a partner, Howard B. Johnson, from Story City. He is still with me. Also in 1949, I started weekly furniture consignment auctions on a vacant lot on the corner of Welch and Knapp Sts. in Ames. We sold there every summer for 5 years. It was known as Beaty's lot. Mr. Beaty had a small grocery store and he thought it would be a good drawing card for his business and it was. Then the same thing happened that did when I started the live stock

sale back in 1933--it became a nuisance to the neighbors. We would sell until 11 or 12 o'clock some nights and customers would park in peoples' driveways. So we had to quit there.

In the summer of 1954, we sold all summer in a used car building on 5th St. in Ames until fall when Dr. Buck, the Dentist, bought it, moved it away and built his dental offices. In the summer of 1955 we held our sales on a lot adjacent to a lunch stand north of Ames on Highway 69, across the road where Hallecks Gravel pit is now. Then they sold out and the new people didn't want us to have sales there. About that time we had an auction for Rood's Hatchery on North Duff in Ames and bought one of the buildings--22x60 ft.--and moved it out to my farm and used it for an auction all the fall and winter of '55 and '56.

Then in the summer of 1956, we enlarged our building to 60x56, and since then have added on until we have the present set-up. Here we hold sales every Tuesday evening for consigned items of all kinds and descriptions--mostly household items. For the past 15 years we have had a monthly salvage auction on the first Saturday of the month. It started out by getting unclaimed freight, first from Watson Bros. Truck Lines then from Bruce Motor Freight. In these auctions we would also have some items from the Dead Parcel Post Branch of the Post Office. Included would be the most unimaginable items. There would be everything that is shipped and liable to be broken or lost. We usually sold these items in the afternoon and at night, would sell new furniture. This would come from a large wholesale house in Omaha who would send used, refused orders, end of line items, slow moving things etc.

The truck lines all decided to have their own salvage stores and we have not had many afternoon salvage sales, only evening ones on the first Saturday of the month. We have had many special sales here at our auction house. For instance, we had

a Model Train Auction where we had buyers from many states. Then we have had many antique auctions for individuals, as well as consignment antique auctions. Many people holding closing out household auctions have a special sale here at the auction house instead of holding them at their homes. These are usually held here in the winter months when it is impossible to hold this type of auction outside.

In February 1958 I started an Auction School here at the auction house and operated it until June 1966. In that time I had 108 students. I would try to hold three 2-week terms each year. I employed some of the good successful auctioneers throughout the state, for instructors. The Secretary of our National Auctioneers Assn. was an instructor. I had a Public Speaker Instructor from ISU; also successful businessmen in related lines. I really had a very successful school. More than one-half of my graduates are successful auctioneers at this time. Many are some of the most popular auctioneers in their states. Auction schools in general feel that less than 25% of their graduates become successful auctioneers so you can readily see that this was a good school. Most auction schools have such a large enrollment that each student is only a number. In a small school, each one gets more personal attention. I never had more than 10 in a class and sometimes only one or two. That is the reason I didn't continue the school. Whether I had one or 10, I gave them the complete course and naturally I lost money. Then another reason was: no one, none of my family or associates in the auction house wanted me to continue. I just love to teach young people, but I had to give this up. Even today, many of my students will call and visit with me and they always tell how grateful they are to me. I had one woman from North Dakota and two older men, both in their 60's.

I have sold all types of auctions. I especially like the old closing out farm auctions the best. (That's what I was brought up on.) I also like pure bred auctions. I have sold many different types of live stock sales: horses, hogs, cattle, and sheep. Then real estate sales are probably the easiest and most profitable to sell. The largest auction I ever held was a 680 Acre farm which I sold in January, 1975, for $1 million. Of course I have had my share of small auctions. During the depression days of the 30's many farm auctions wouldn't amount to $500. I have been touched by the depression sales. One day I sold out a man who the bank had foreclosed on, and my commission was only $12.50. When the clerk paid me, the man whom I had just sold out, followed me with tears in his eyes, saying, "I wish I could make $12.50 in one afternoon. I don't have a red cent to my name, have a wife and 5 children and don't know where I am going to stay tonight." I was hard up and needed the money for my family but I gave him one half of the commission. He thanked me then and many times later in his life. I have always been glad that I did that. I could relate many other sad stories about depression days also.

I have sold many queer items. The first year I was in the auction business we had a closing out sale for a Mr. Bell who was retiring from the farm. He had a hired man--a native of Russia--who had worked for him many years. Mr. Bell had shipped a load of cattle to Chicago and while there he slipped and broke his leg, consequently going to the hospital. This Russian boy worked in the hospital and he and Mr. Bell became good friends. When Mr. Bell came back to Iowa, this boy came with him and worked for him for many years. All the neighbors wanted to hire him and he didn't know how to decide which one to work for. Mr. Bell suggested that we sell him--that is, his services--at auction. We did that and I don't remember the exact amount per month that we re-

ceived for him but I do remember it was about twice the going wages at that time.

One time we were having a sale for a storage company, selling items that had been stored for years. In this particular sale, I sold a small travelling bag that was locked. So we sold it AS IS. When I shook it I could feel something in it. An older man bought it for 50 or 75 cents. A few days later he came up to me, very excited, saying, "Lee (he always called me that) do you know what I found in the bag?" Then he told me it was an urn with the cremated ashes of someone. the name and age and date was on the urn. He took it to the undertaker for disposal.

An acquaintance came to our auction house one day, wanting us to sell an ocelot (a S. American wild cat). We advertised it for the next sale. He had a price--he wanted $200 for it. I knew that we would never get it sold, but I thought we might have some entertainment out of it. So the night of the sale, he brought it out and many looked at it before sale time but no one was interested. In the meantime, I told three different older men who attend every auction, to bid on it. I told them they were not going to get it anyway. They agreed and I told them not to tell anyone about our deal. I had a student selling that evening and I told him to ask for $100 to start it and one of my friends that I had posted, bid $75. His wife turned to him and said "Are you crazy?" Then when my student asked for a raise, another man bid $100 and his wife stood up and was going to hit him with her handbag. About that time the third friend bid $125 and his wife nearly fainted. By that time the entire crowd was hilarious, and I took the microphone and said: "I am sorry folks. I want to thank you for bidding, but the owner wants more for his ocelot."

There are many amusing incidents that have taken place in the more than 60 years that I have been selling at auction. There are also many sad things that happen at auctions. I was holding a closing out auction for a farmer who was retiring and when we came to sell the horses, I wanted to ask him about their ages, soundness, etc., but we couldn't find him. Finally someone said he had gone to the house. We sent for him but he wouldn't come out. He couldn't stand to see his horses sold.

Auctioneers are called Colonel. Most auctioneers today don't know why an auctioneer has this title. It is like Honorable before an attorney's name--it doesn't mean anything. After the Civil War, the government had horses, mules, wagons, harness, and many other items to sell and it was up to the Colonel of his company or regiment to dispose of them. Accordingly, many (in fact, most), resorted to the auction method. However there were no available auctioneers so the Colonel had to do it himself. Some of them came home from the service and became successful auctioneers. Among them (and the most outstanding) was Col. F. M. Woods of Lincoln, Nebraska, who became a widely known pure bred livestock auctioneer. He specialized in Shorthorn cattle and sold sales all over the midwest. When he held an auction in any locality, the local auctioneer was usually employed to help in the ring. After he had worked with Col. Woods, he would become so elated that he had assisted him at an auction that he immediately attached "Colonel" to his name. It became so common that all auctioneers thought they should have the title.

There is no profession that has improved its standing and reputation among the public as the auctioneers. As mentioned above, many of the first successful auctioneers were army men and with no apologies to them, many were on the rough side of life. So others starting in the auction business

thought they had to be a little rough and tell stories that should not be told in public. I held a purebred Hampshire sale for a breeder at Kingsley, Iowa, and his local auctioneer who assisted was one of the type I have just described. The second year I sold this sale for the same man and his wife and some of the other neighborhood ladies were in attendance. The local auctioneer was not there. When this breeder paid me for selling the sale, he gave me an extra $10 bill. I said, "You have given me too much." He said, "No, did you notice the ladies at the auction? I told my wife to come and bring some of the neighbor ladies as you wouldn't offend them as Col. _____ does." I thanked him and have never forgotten the incident. I have told this story to every student that I have ever taught. It is a fact that ladies never attended auctions until after the 1st World War. Everything changes after a war. Then another reason the auction profession has improved is that we have Auction Schools and State and National Auctioneers Associations. Our National Association has been holding educational seminars and we are constantly trying to improve ourselves.

There are many different types of auctions. Some auctioneers specialize in certain commodities. There are many who sell only antiques; others sell only real estate; others sell only commercial auctions, such as businesses and factories; still others sell anything they are asked to. Usually these auctioneers are confined to their local communities. Specialists are usually State or nationally known and employed.

Up to this point I have tried to tell of my auctioneering story in some order. I have never kept any notes and I have relied on memory. I am now going to give you just random shots about my auctioneering--just as I think of them. One thing I would like to mention is the many changes that have taken place in the auction business since

the turn of the century. All sales at the present time require purchasers to pay cash at time of the sale. Of course by cash, I mean cash or checks. Auctions do not have a plan where one can get credit. That is the seller's privilege if he feels like doing that. Very few do. Of course in real estate sales amounting to several thousand dollars, the purchaser has made arrangement before the auction with a Loan Company or Bank or other financial institution. In the early part of the century, farm auctions gave terms. The bank clerking the auction was glad to take notes from the farmers buying livestock and equipment. (Banks clerked most all auctions in the early days.) The terms usually read as follows: Terms of Sale--All sums of $10 and under, cash in hand; on all sums above $10, one year's time without interest if paid when due--if not paid when due, 8% interest from date of sale. 2% discount for cash on all sums above $10. The bankers usually didn't charge the seller for clerking the sale as he wanted to get some money loaned out.

Another change is the way auctioneers handle a sale. If Mr. A wanted to sell out and retire or move to some other state or locality, and he had to have an auction, he would contact his local auctioneer many weeks and sometimes months ahead of time to get a date. Most people knew when they were going to make a move and would get arrangements made ahead of time. All farmers moved the 1st of March in those days. About 2 weeks before the sale, Mr. A. would contact his local printer (usually the newspaper) and have him write up a sale ad and print some sale bills, and run the ad in the weekly paper. Mr. A would take the sale bills and drive over the country posting them on telephone poles at corners in the country, take some to other sales held before his and post them on the barn, and put some in store windows in several small neighboring towns. The day of the auction, the auctioneer would come out in the morning before the sale and he

and the banker and a few neighbors would have dinner with the family. The auctioneers did not write up the sales or attend to any details before the auction. When the sale was over the auctioneer usually collected his fee that evening before he left the farm. Rates for farm sales varied in different localities. Some auctioneers charged 1%, some charged 1% plus $5, some even charged 1½%. 2% was unheard of until many years later. Now the rates run from 2% up to as high as 5%. The point I am trying to make is that the auctioneer or auction company, in this day and age, gives the seller his date, goes to his premises, inspects the sale items, writes the ad and takes care of the advertising. Many auctioneers now have their own clerks. This is what we call complete auction service.

Another interesting change is the lunch situation. Now if a sale is to continue through the noon hour the auctioneer usually arranges for some church group or service club to serve a lunch at the sale. Of course they charge for their food and make money for their organization. Usually the members donate some of or all of the food, so all they sell is profit. In the early days, the farmer holding an auction furnished a free lunch at noon. He would go to town the day before the sale and stock up on cheese, cold meat, buns, coffee, and paper sacks. Then the night before the sale, they would put a wash boiler on the stove and start making coffee. At time for lunch everything would be set out side and they would announce free lunch was ready. The auctioneer usually furnished the tin cups for coffee and if you have never drunk hot coffee from a tin cup you don't know what hot coffee is!

I have travelled to sales many different ways--every mode of horse traveling (horse back, buggy, sled, wagon); have gone on trains and planes. I have often said I had used every mode of travelling except boat and snowmobile. I have travelled in mud on old side roads both with horses and cars.

One sale I remember the roads were so bad and the weather so foggy that it took longer to go and come than it did to sell the sale. I remember another time I was driving a livery team on a two seated cutter and had Mr. Posegate and the clerk in the back seat. When we were within 3 miles of home and coming down a small hill, the team started to run and I couldn't hold them. I asked the back seat riders to help me hold them and with no answer I glanced around to find they had jumped out. I finally headed them into a tree and got them stopped.

Then I have had two car wrecks going to sales. One was in a bad snow storm and the other was on icy roads. Furtunately neither one was too bad, although I ruined a car each time. No one was hurt. In selling pure bred sales, I have travelled all night, changing trains once or twice. That is one reason I didn't like pure bred sales--I didn't like the travelling. In those days it was by rail, of course.

There aren't too many accidents at auctions. Recently a lady backed up in a yard with her arm full of dishes and stepped into a hole and broke her leg. Another time a man had a stroke at a sales pavilion. Then some have been knocked down and bruised slightly by cattle at a farm sale. Outside of being kicked by a calf at a farm sale, I never had any serious accidents. Not too many years ago I was selling a tractor and the owner got up on it, started it to show how good it worked, and I was standing directly back of it when the hydraulic hose broke and just covered me and a farmer standing beside me. We were drenched with oil. If I hadn't had glasses on it might have been harmful. I sure learned never to stand too close to a machine when in motion.

I have held sales in a variety of places also. I have sold many farm sales in deep snow. One sale in particular I remember, the machinery was so covered that some of the implements had only levers sticking out. I have sold many sales in the rain; I have sold in some real nice places; some real estate sales in the community rooms of a bank. Sometimes in a city hall. Sometimes in our auction house. I have sold in many real nice modern live stock sales pavilions such as the one at the Iowa State Fair Grounds in Des Moines, Iowa. Several years ago a health resort in Colfax, Iowa was converted into a sales pavilion and called THE SWINE PALACE. I sold several Yorkshire sales in it. During the first years I was in business in Ames, we used to sell a sale nearly every Saturday for a George O'Brien on 5th St. in Ames (where Marion's Sandwich Shop is now, across from Mathison's garage). He had a small implement business in an old house. There was a large maple tree in front and he used to advertise his sales "under the Maple Tree". Farmers would bring a few small items--sometimes a horse and calf--and he would sell some new items each week. Then I held some sales at various places in town before we had the Livestock Auction on North Grand that has been mentioned. The old ice plant east of Duff, just south of the railroad was originally a mill and there was quite a yard there and I had a few sales in it. Also I used the lot just south of the elevator on Duff once. I sold a Hampshire hog sale at DeSmit, So. Dakota for a Mr. A. M. Anderson and he had no place to arrange seats except in the hay mow of his large barn. So accordingly he arranged seats and built a long ramp to drive the hogs up and we held a sale. Many newspapers carried the story of the "Highest Hog Sale in America". It was probably true at that time--not in price but location.

Another time I was selling Spotted Polands at Le Claire, Iowa (that was of course before sales pavilions) and the breeder had rented the basement of a garage that backed up to the Mississippi River. When I saw the arrangement I pointed out that it would be absolutely too dark inside and since it was a nice winter day it would be better to bring his sale ring, made out of a hay rack, outside and we could sell in the light. We did--sold hogs right on the bank of the river. At this same sale, the local auctioneer (Bob Troy) told me many of the people there would want to bid half dollars which of course we didn't do at a pure bred sale. But he said, "I have a scheme I work on them. When they bid (for instance) $45.50 I call it $46.00 with a half off and they were satisfied that they were bidding one half dollar at a time when in fact it was only the last bid." So accordingly if I would sell a hog for $65, I would say sold for $65 with a half off and the clerk would record it that way and everyone was happy about it.

Many times we would hold pure bred sales in lumber yards, out in the country in some machine shed or old barn. Of course I have sold many sales (bazaar sales) in many churches. I sold a farm one time (an unimproved farm) out in the road. There was no pickup to stand in so I stood on the front bumper of a car and sold the farm. So you see, you can hold an auction any place and also any time. A heated tent was quite popular for hog sales in the winter. They were heated with salamanders and they would smoke and gas and never get a tent very warm. A heated tent was sure mis-named.

Until recent years no one ever held sales on Sunday. Now they have become quite common. I have never held an auction on Sunday. I have had them every other day of the week, every month in the year and at many different hours. I held one sale at 8:30 in the morning and also one for an organization raising money at midnight. So

it doesn't make any difference when or where you are; you can have an auction.

MY FAMILY

I do not need to give a history of my family as all my relatives have a family tree. But I might give you a few highlights of my family background. We secured a history of the Joy family from the library in Washington, D.C. In the book we found where six Joy brothers came from England in the early 1620's. Some came to the United States and some went to Canada. I am the 9th generation from Tom Joy, who was one of these brothers. A young lady came into our auction house one day and said to my son, who happened to be present, "Your name must be Joy as you look like my father." She was a student at our University and had come from Canada and her name before her marriage was Joy. Accordingly we looked up her ancestry in the above mentioned book and she was a descendent of one of the original Joy brothers from England.

My father was born in St. Charles, Illinois, Oct. 28, 1856. He came to Iowa in the early 1870's and his father (Napolean Comfort Joy) eventually bought land here and my father started farming on the original Joy farm in Greene county, Iowa. I was born on that farm. My mother was born in Cornish Flats, New Hampshire, March 17th, 1859 and her folks moved to Michigan in her early life. She came to Iowa to visit her sister and taught school in the school house where I started to school. She later married my father on New Year's day, 1880. Her maiden name was Mary Addie Witherill. I had 3 brothers and one sister who have all passed away. I had two brothers, Walter and Leslie, who were older than I and one brother, Warren, and my sister, Winnifred, who were younger. I have many nephews and nieces throughout the United States.

My wife was born Murrel LaMontna Symes at Rolfe, Iowa, on October 3rd, 1891. Her parents were Albert Benjamin Symes and Verie Gray Symes. She had one sister, Murree, who was 2 years younger. Before my wife was 4 years of age, her mother passed away. Her father later remarried and had a son, Kermit, and a daughter, Lucerne, by his second wife. All my wife's family have passed away also. She and I are lone survivors of our families.

We were married December 8th, 1915, and have 3 children--Bonita, Everett and Eddie. They are all successful and doing well for themselves. We have 4 grandchildren and one great grandchild. We have lived in 13 houses since we were married--all in or around Ames--but have been in our present home since 1938.

Since we are old and have been married more than 61 years, we are getting along exceptionally well. My wife broke her leg 4 years ago and had surgery 3 years ago, but is still doing her own work and getting meals and doing surprisingly well. I was never in a hospital until October 1976 when I had major surgery in Iowa City, Iowa, for a tumor to be removed from my jaw. Then I had cobalt treatments for 6 weeks, and as I am writing this, I am recovering from all I have mentioned. As far as family goes, I have much to be thankful for.

In April, 1949, we organized a State Auctioneers Association at Sac City, Iowa. I was elected as Vice President. Since that time I have never missed a state meeting until October of this year, shortly after I came from the Hospital. In 1961, at Spencer, Iowa, the State Association honored me with a plaque for my regular attendance and gave me a life membership. Then again in our spring meeting in April, 1974, we celebrated our 25th anniversary

and I was given a special plaque for my attendance and devotion to the organization. I have attended more than 20 National Auctioneers' Conventions and in July, 1966, at our annual convention in Philadelphia, I was honored with a plaque and admittance to the Hall of Fame for Auctioneers. The National gives two such awards each year. I am modestly calling attention to these awards not to be boasting but being thankful that I have been recognized by fellow auctioneers.

MY LIFE'S ACTIVITIES

In the past pages I have tried to give a good description of my life and have tried to keep it in some kind of order and sequence. Now I am going to give some hit and miss stories that come to mind that I think might be of some interest.

The first business I ever entered into was when I was probably only 7 or 8 years old. I wanted to sell something, so accordingly answered an ad in a farm paper and ordered some (I think about a dozen) automatic hame fasteners for harnesses. I started out selling them but I think my father eventually ended up with them. They were metal, built like a modern load binder, supposed to be much quicker than buckling a hame strap.

Some of the earliest recollections of my life bring to mind the church we attended when I was quite small. It was a Presbyterian church in Dana, Iowa, about 2 miles from our home. We would go to church and Sunday school every Sunday unless it was storming. My Sunday school teacher was a Mrs. Lee Kinsey, whom I have always thought was one of the most perfect ladies I ever knew. She started a Mission Band (that was her name for it) and we met on Saturday afternoons and talked about missions and it really was interesting to us children. Sometimes my father was

too busy to take me so I would walk, and of course I thought that was too much so I talked my father into buying me a bicycle. That was one of the proudest days of my life, getting a bicycle. Another interesting part about our church was the annual Christmas Eve program and tree. Of course we children all had to speak pieces or sing. What a time for our mother who had to get us ready to go and get our presents hidden in a big box. Then my father would get the horses hitched up to the bobsled, put some straw in the box, get plenty of blankets to wrap us in, and away we would go. Of course it was always late when we got home. But it was such a pleasant experience and I will never forget, no matter how old I get.

When my brother Warren and I were going to high school in Grand Junction, we had to walk about 4 miles. We used to walk down the railroad tracks and got so we could walk a rail for many, many feet. We thought it was wonderful when father bought a driving mare and a buggy for us to drive to school. Then in 1910, he bought a new Model T Ford and let us drive it to school. Were we ever the envy of all the others. There were no school buses then and most of the children were from the town or if they lived in the country, many stayed in town from Monday until Friday evening. We were the first to drive a car to school in that area and many people said, "Fletcher Joy is sure going to ruin his boys." I will admit that we took some advantage of our father's generosity and after school we would give some of our friends a ride and wouldn't get home in time to do our evening chores. After the newness wore off, we got back to normal and would come home right after school and I don't think we were spoiled too much by the experience.

I have told you about our living in South Dakota so I don't have much more to relate until after I graduated from High School. I worked part of one summer with a county surveyor. Then I worked for a Mr. Ray Wessling, who was a real estate dealer and had several farms to oversee. He hired me to go around to the different farms and check on painters, carpenters, fence builders and others, mostly to see what progress they were making and to see if they needed any extra material. He bought an Excelsior motorcycle for me to ride. That was quite an experience for one just out of high school. His other employees were all older than I and many of them resented me because I was just a boy, in their estimation. However, I got along fine, and only worked at that job one summer. Next I got a job working in a garage for Elmer Gaylord. (I believe I have mentioned this before.)

After I came to Ames in the fall of 1914, I roomed with the Frank Morris family until I got married on the 8th of December, 1915. On that day, the Morris family moved into a new home (703 Burnett) and we rented the house where I had been rooming. The next spring we bought a house at 828 Carroll Avenue, and lived there until 1918 when we moved on to a farm at Ontario, into a new house. We lived there for 4 years and we had the misfortune to lose the farm, partly because of poor management, partly because of the economy. Previous to my moving to the farm, I worked at a garage in Ames selling cars and then I became interested in purebred livestock sales and wanted to get onto a farm. While living at Ontario, I farmed our own 60 acres and rented some other land. I raised purebred Hampshire hogs and of course, kept some cattle. At one time I had a herd of milk goats (40 head). I have sold them all over the country. I remember shipping some to Ohio. It was very common to get $100 for a fresh goat. Goats milk is the most easily

digested milk known and was recommended by many a doctor for ailing infants and even for grown ups.

I kept busy farming, selling auctions, and doing custom corn shelling. The only use anyone had for a steam engine was to thresh, unless he wanted to shell corn in the winter, and it was such hard work keeping a steam engine going! One had to watch all pipes to see that none froze at night. I shredded corn one winter with a steam engine and it was a hard way to make a living. Merrill Hunter and Walt Grove and I bought a Case 10 HP steam engine in the early 20's and I ran the engine to thresh for Grove and then threshed a run out east of Ames--Merritt Dailey, Bill Taylor, Ben Keltner, Chris Jensen (H.P.'s father). I threshed that run for 3 or 4 years, and also ran the tractor for 2 company machines--Grove, Bill Dodds, Walt Morris, Harry A Allen, Bill Barr run. While living in Ontario, we had a company machine and I pulled it with my Titan tractor. In the winter, Ward Pontius and I shelled corn.

To one who has never run a corn sheller or shredder in the cold Iowa winters, you could never explain what it meant to get out on a winter morning with temperature zero or lower, to try to start a gas engine and keep it going all day. I also operated the neighborhood threshing machine in the summer. After moving back to town, I still kept my tractor. Then I got started in a small way in the implement business. The first place I had was merely an office in the basement where the Des Moines Register now has its office, on Kellogg, just north of the railroad tracks. I sold some planters, cultivators and small accessories until it looked like I needed a building. Lew Cole built the building that is now Smith Real Estate Building on Kellogg, just south of the railroad tracks. Later it became the locker plant. I sold 24 two-row cultivators one summer. They were just

coming into use. Then I sold grass seeds, going to Des Moines every day after some. After collecting for it, I would go back for more. I was getting along fine until about 1926, and times started getting worse and I failed in the implement business. While in the business, I ran a steam threshing machine in season. I was always busy, but sometimes I failed to use good business judgement. In 1928, I went to Denver to visit my brother, Warren, and to see if there was an opportunity there for an auctioneer. There was no chance. In 1929, I started to work for Mathison Ford garage. and worked there for 3 years.

In the spring of 1929 I did one of the most foolish things I have ever done in my life time. A man had a son in Montana and he wanted some help to put in his wheat crop. They led me to believe that there would be a great opportunity there for an auctioneer. Accordingly, I quit my job, and took off for Montana on the last of March. I helped put in the wheat and looked around for an opening for an auctioneer but in that area they didn't have 5 auctions in a year. By now my family had sold the furniture and was ready to come out the first of June, as soon as school was out. I got back just in time to stop them. Here I was: no furniture, no money, no job. No one except my wife knows what a failure I was. Mathison gave me my job back, we rented a furnished apartment and started over again. These experiences helped me later to use better judgment. I was always gullible and trusted everyone. In 1932 the Ford business got poor and I changed jobs. I worked for Yates Oil Company until the spring of 1933 when times got so bad I was laid off. It seemed that about the time I would be down to my last cent, some one would have an auction and I was started up again. I have told you that I started a weekly livestock sale in 1933. The reason: I had nothing else to do.

An incident in my life that has always pleased me happened in 1924 when times were hard. Several farmers expressed their need for some one to shred corn fodder for them. No one in this area had a shredder. I had no money, only the power to run it (both the Titan tractor and the steam engine). No one would loan me the money to buy a shredder. I went to Des Moines one day and found a new shredder at the Rumely Mchinery Co. It had been there several years. Corn shredding is hard, dirty work and very few would operate a shredder. I told them who I was and the need for a shredder in our area and they were very happy to see me and glad to make a sale for an item they had on hand so long. When it came time to settle for it, I told them I had no money, only plenty of work and the ambition to operate a shredder. They were taken back--they had been so happy they were going to get rid of that shredder they had had on hand so long.

After some talk among themselves, they said: "Mr. Joy, this is the most unusual situation. Most people have at least some money to pay down on an implement, but since you have the desire to operate this machine, we believe you are honest and we will do the unusual. We will sell you this shredder and you can pay for it from the work you do with it." They shipped it to me and I had to get a farmer who I was going to shred for to loan me the money to pay the freight. To make a long story short, I made good money shredding corn--hard work--but I paid the Rumely Company as soon as I could.

I mentioned before that I moved out here on the farm in May, 1938. The two years previous, I farmed the land adjacent to the Ames Livestock Sales pavilion south of Ames. My oldest son, Everett, was interested in farming and we really got started to make money. One year I had 25 acres of wheat that made 40 bu. per acre and I remember we sold it for $1.07 per bu. When we moved out

here to our present location, we were away out in the country. Now we have been in the Corporation of Ames for many years and are surrounded by homes. We farmed several small tracts of land between here and 13th Street in Ames. We raised some cattle, milked some purebred Brown Swiss cows and were getting along fine. In the spring of 1942, Everett bought a John Deere B Tractor and Case hay baler. He ran the baler and had a good business when he went to the army. I finished his baling season for him and ran it the next 3 years until he came home. We had one of the few balers in the area and we were much in demand. We baled from Nevada to Mackey and were very busy all the time.

In the meantime, I started a flock of purebred Montadale sheep, which I still have. I also disposed of the purebred Brown Swiss and started a herd of purebred Hereford cattle. When the houses were built so close I had to dispose of the cattle as children would roam in our pasture and it was too dangerous.

It has been said that if one wants a liberal education, just deal with the public. No one can ever guess what they will do next. I will cite a few incidents that prove the point above. Many years ago, a farmer who was going to retire came to us (Posegate and Joy), hiring us to conduct the closing out farm sale for him. He asked us what commission we charged. At that time the rate was 1½%. He asked how much that would be on a $5000 sale. We told him $75, but he said, "Oh my, I can't pay that much." Mr. Posegate told him we could fix it so he wouldn't have to pay so much. "How can you arrange to do that?" he asked. Mr. Posegate told him we would just sell his property a little cheaper and then he wouldn't have so much commission to pay. Again he said, "Oh don't do that." We had his sale and as usual it amounted to more than he ever expected and he was quite happy.

Another farmer having a closing out sale told me when I arrived at his farm the day of the sale that he had a price on all his implements. If I couldn't get his price he wouldn't sell. Such an arrangement would ruin the auction. I asked him "If I only get $65 on an item that you want $75 for will you not sell?" That was the idea, he replied. Then I asked him if I got a bid of $50 on an item that he wanted $40 for, would he then give the purchaser back $10, as he would be getting more than he asked for. He looked at me (he wasn't the most intelligent man in the world) and asked if that was the way it worked. I told him definitely so he said I better forget the prices and have a regular sale. We did and he got more than he expected and I got my commission, which I might not have if we had gone ahead with his first plan.

One farmer had made a list of all his items he was going to sell in his closing out farm sale. He had every item priced so he expected a certain amount of money for the sale. After we were through, we had over $1100 more than he had expected. When I asked him if he was satisfied he said: "Yes and No." I asked what he meant. "Well" he said, "If I had been doing it I would have done it different. I would have sold some things higher and some not so high."

In my early days of auctioneering the main attraction at farm sales were the horses. Many would blanket their horses, keep the barn clean and of course decorate the horses' manes and tails on sale days, with ribbons. One man having a sale bought a new wheel barrow a few weeks before sale day to keep his barn clean. It happened to be the first item we sold at the sale. It is quite usual to sell the first few items quickly to get the crowd in the mood to bid fast. This wheel barrow cost about $5 or $6 and I sold it for one dollar. We went ahead with the sale. It was one of the extra good sales where the horses sold extremely high. When

the sale was over, I said to him that he had an extra good sale. "Oh yes, but I lost money on that wheel barrow" was his reply. All the above quoted men were serious in their statements. So I repeat: You can never tell what the public will do.

At a closing out house auction, the seller had all his items out and arranged in the yard. It was a nice summer day and with a large crowd several people were exploring around the premises and some one found an old outboard motor in the garage. They asked me if it was going to be sold. I asked the seller and he said it was only junk. I persuaded him to get it out and let me sell it. It brought $25 in the auction. In the same auction, we had a color TV not too old and the seller told me not to sell it for less than $500. We kept it until the last item and after working hard I finally got $495 bid on it and of course I felt sure that he would let me sell it. To my surprise (and every one elses) he wouldn't sell it, even after getting $25 for the item he thought was worthless. The man that bid $495 said he wouldn't give another cent. This is just another incident proving you cannot tell what the public might do.

This is another unusual incident. A man came to us one day several years ago and hired us to sell his sale. He said "Now don't tell any one that I am going to have a sale." We said it would be hard to have a sale if no one knew anything about it. His reason was that he owed so many people and didn't want them to know. The day of the sale arrived and the implement dealer, coal dealer, feed company men--all were there to collect. He moved away and many years later when I was making a sale 50 miles from here, he came to the sale. He had changed his name, and since leaving here, his son has become one of the most popular and outstanding auctioneers in Iowa.

In about 1945 I started in the purebred Yorkshire hog business and pioneered them in this section of the state. In fact, on June 10th, 1947, I had one of the first Yorkshire auctions in Iowa. Everett was home then and both boys helped with this sale. We sold 80 pigs just 10 weeks old and they averaged almost $80 per head and were sold to buyers in Texas, Pennsylvania and all over Iowa. It was a phenomenal hog sale. Nelson G. Kraschel of Harlan, Iowa, who had been Governor of Iowa, was the auctioneer. Although he had retired from the auction business, he consented to sell this sale for me. He had been one of the outstanding livestock auctioneers in America. Many who attended that sale still are amazed at the prices and the buyers. Yorkshires were just becoming popular and no one could have struck a better time to have such a sale. I have many years ago quit all my livestock operations except the sheep. At the present I have a small herd of Sitka deer (Japanese).

After I stopped raising livestock, I cleared my timber pasture and now lease the farm land to a neighbor. For the past 20 years auctioneering has become a full time occupation.

This 1976 bi-centennial year has really been one of the most rewarding years of all. In May, I celebrated 65 years since graduation from high school. I attended the annual high school alumni banquet. On July 3rd, I drove a team of yearling mules (my son Everett raised them) in the big parade that the city of Ames had. Then in July I went to a National Auctioneers Annual Convention at St. Louis and never attended a convention that I enjoyed more. On my 84th birthday, I went up in the large arch at St. Louis. My wife and I enjoyed good health this year. Of course, I had surgery, and while writing this story of my life, I have been recuperating.

L. Matson 7-1-86

I have mentioned before that I always had many friends who helped me. Briefly I would like to remember many who have passed on who were a great help and guide and inspiration to me. Floyd Buck; Roy Youngman; F. F. Luther; W. S. Grove; W. T. Barr; Frank Morris; Hollis Manning; C. A. Knudson; Hans Nelson; Merritt Daily; Henry Dunkle; and many others.

I started a list of personal friends. When I reached 100, I hadn't got very far into the alphabet. No one, but no one, has more friends than I. I haven't accumulated a large fortune but I have something worth more--FRIENDS.

I HAVE HAD GOOD HEALTH, WONDERFUL FAMILY, GOOD BUSINESS AND A MULTITUDE OF FRIENDS. WHAT MORE COULD ONE EXPECT FROM LIFE?